

Letters, from March 3, 1891 to March 18, 1891, with transcript

(Office Copy) #1336 19th St., Washington, D.C., March 18, 1891. L.S. Fechheimer, Esq., #141 Race St., Cincinnati, Ohio. My dear Sir:

I have just returned to Washington, and find that I have neglected to acknowledge receipt of your note of March 5th, enclosing copies of Dr. Gallaudet's letters to you. I presumed, of course, that Dr. Gallaudet had copies of his own letters, otherwise I should not have written to him for them. I am very sorry to have troubled you in the matter. I have always treated President Gallaudet with perfect courtesy, however much I may have differed from him in his views. I have, therefore, been much pained to find from his letters to you that he has sought to impugn my motives. As I am conscious of the rectitude of my purposes, I could well afford to pass over the whole matter in silence were it not for recent developments. On Monday, March 2d, Dr. Gallaudet received from me copies of all my letters to you, and next morning, Tuesday, March 3d, he publicly addressed the students of the college upon my conduct towards himself. The "Deaf Mute Companion" of March 7th publishes an account of his address, in which he is reported to have charged me with wilful falsehood in my communications regarding the Normal Department.

I have written to Dr. Gallaudet upon the subject and enclose a copy of my letter. [dated March 16 th . 1891]

I trust sincerely that his remarks have been incorrectly reported. I enclose copies of correspondence with Prest. Gallaudet and Prof. Fay.

Yours very sincerely, Sgd. Alexander Graham Bell P.S. Prof Fay is Vice President of National College for Deaf Mutes and Editor of the Annals of the Deaf.

Library of Congress

March 3rd, 1891. Dear Professor Bell:

When I wrote to ask you for a copy of your letter to Mr. Fechheimer, I had no idea I should be putting you to such an amount of trouble as you have taken, for which, however, I thank you very much.

I have no copies of my letters to Mr. Fechheimer, but I will write him and ask him to furnish you with copies.

Truly yours, (Signed) E.M.Gallaudet.

March ? 8 , 1891. Dear Professor Bell:

A report has come to me through a source which seems reliable, that you urged members of the Conference Committee on the Sundry Civil Bill to strike out the \$3,000 for oral teaching in the College, or rather to withhold it and agree to the action of the Senate.

This co ?? ur se seems so inconsistent with your attitude earlier, when you asked Mr. Allison to move such an amendment that I feel constrained to ask an explanation.

Truly yours, (Signed) E.M.Gallaudet.

#1336 19th St., Washington, D.C., March 9, 1891. Dear Dr.Gallaudet:

In answer to your note of the 8th inst., I enclose printed proof of my letter submitted to the Conference Committee by Mr. Cannon.

Yours truly, (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell. Enclosure. Letter to Hon.Joseph G.Cannon, dated Feb.28, 1891.

The Conference Committee of Congress on Appropriations.

STATEMENT OF Dr. ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL.

1336 19 th Street, Washington, D. C., *February* 28, 1891. Hon. Joseph G. Cannon,
Chairman of the Appropriation Committee of the House of Representatives .

Dear Sir: May I trouble you to inform the members of your Committee that since I appeared before the Committee I have received letters and telegrams from the principals of the following schools for the deaf, objecting to the proposed Normal Department for training graduates of the National Deaf-Mute College as teachers of the deaf:

1. Institution for the Improved Instruction of Deaf-Mutes, New York city, N. Y.
2. Clarke Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Northampton, Mass.
3. Horace Mann School for the Deaf, Boston, Mass.
4. St. Joseph's Institute for the Improved Instruction of Deaf-Mutes, Fordham, N. Y.
5. Portland Day School for the Deaf, Portland, Maine.
6. Rhode Island School for the Deaf, Providence, R. I.
7. Milwaukee Day School for the Deaf, Milwaukee, Wis.
8. Pennsylvania Oral School for the Deaf, Scranton, Penn.
9. Cincinnati Oral School for the Deaf, Cincinnati, Ohio.
10. La Crosse Oral School for the Deaf, La Crosse, Wis.
11. Wausau Day School for the Deaf, Wausau, Wis.
12. Whipple's Home School for the Deaf, Mystic, Conn.

Library of Congress

13. German Evangelical Lutheran Institute for the Deaf, Norris, Mich.
14. Mr. Knapp's Institute, Baltimore, Md.
15. McCowen Oral School for young Deaf Children, Englewood, Ill.
16. Miss Keeler's Articulation Class for Deaf-Mutes, New York. N. Y.
17. Miss Parker's School for the Deaf, St. Louis, Mo.
18. Sarah Fuller Home for Little Children Who Cannot Hear, West Medford, Mass.
19. Albany Home Oral School for the Deaf, Albany, N. Y.
20. Oral Training School for Teachers of the Deaf, Scranton, Penn.
21. Oral Training School for Teachers of the Deaf, Phonological Institute, Milwaukee, Wis.

The principals of these schools agree with me in thinking that an increase in the number of deaf teachers of the deaf will work injury to the cause of articulation teaching, for the reason that deaf persons cannot teach speech to the deaf.

There would be no objection to an increased appropriation for the purpose of enabling the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb to employ articulation teachers and a professor of elocution for the benefit of the deaf students, but there is strong objection felt to an appropriation for the purposes set forth by President Gallaudet.

The impression has been created that the proposed Normal Department is a resuscitation of the plan suggested last year by Mr. L. S. Fechheimer, of Cincinnati, and brought to the notice of your Committee at that time by the Hon. Benjamin Butterworth.

Library of Congress

The following telegram received from Mr. Fechheimer shows that this is not the case. Mr. Fechheimer says (under date Feb. 16, 1891):

“Prof. Gallaudet does not correctly represent “my ideas or convictions if he states that I am “in favor of using the appropriation for establishing “a normal school for training deaf “teachers of the deaf.

“My letter of January fifteenth to the Hon. “Benjamin Butterworth states that the appropriation “ought to be made upon condition that “both methods be taught, but only because we “cannot get one without the other.

“If, in the fullness of your superior experience “and judgment, you deem it harmful to the “cause of oral teaching to have the appropriation “cover both methods, I authorize you to “use my name in opposition, unless the appropriation “be made in conformity with your “conditions, which I fully approve.”

The above telegram justifies me in claiming that Mr. Fechheimer is opposed to the appropriation for the purposes stated by President Gallaudet, and would favor limiting the appropriation to the teaching of articulation to the students of the College.

I am, my dear sir, yours respectfully, ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL.

Dear President Gallaudet:

Since I saw you in Philadelphia my attention has been directed to the enclosed cutting from the “Companion” of March 7, 1891.

Allow me to ask you whether it contains a true account of the remarks you made to the students of the College concerning me.

Library of Congress

I have myself so often been misquoted in the deaf-mute journals, that I hope sincerely you have been incorrectly reported.

Yours truly, (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell. Pres.E.M.Gallaudet, Kendall Green.

March 3, 1891. Dear Prof. Fay:

Now that the Congressional struggle is over, I have a moment's leisure to write a few lines to you.

Your letter in " Science " was quite a surprise to me, and I willingly accept your correction. I had no idea, when I wrote the letter to Senator Allison, that I had used language capable of the construction you have put upon it. It did not matter one button to my argument whether the sign language was used as THE medium of instruction—with a capital T—or simply as a A medium. It was sufficient that it was used at all, and that the other methods employed English alone. I certainly did not mean to convey the idea that the sign language was used alone, to the exclusion of English, for there is no school, in existence that does not that. Still, now that you have called attention to the point, it seems strange to me that I failed to notice it myself. My meaning would have been just as well expressed if I had said, "In the Columbia Institution a foreign language (the sign language) is used in the instruction of the deaf, whereas the rival methods employ the English language alone for this purpose."

If I had been afforded time to expand the statement before the Senate committee, I would have claimed that in the Kendall School the sign language was not only used, but used to such an extent that it became the mother tongue of the pupils; and that a higher education could not be obtained in the college without acquiring the language of signs.

Library of Congress

Your correction, therefore, touches the phraseology alone, and not the spirit of the paragraph. I claim, and intended to claim, that both schools are sign schools in the ordinary acceptation of that term.

I intend to write a letter to “ Science, ” in which I will comment upon Gillett's latest communication and Job Williams' letter, and then take up the educational part of President Gallaudet's article and your correction of my letter to Senator Allison.

I regret that I cannot do so at once, for I want to give all my thoughts at present to the preparation of an address upon “Marriage,” which I have promised to deliver on the sixth of this month to the members of the Literary Society of the College. I want to write it out beforehand, so that the deaf mute newspapers may be able to obtain it in an ungarbled form. It is unfortunate that the address comes at a time when the feelings of the students have doubtless been aroused against me by my recent opposition to the plans of the College. I can hardly hope to escape misrepresentation, especially when dealing with so delicate a subject.

It grieves me very much to know that my views are misunderstood by those I desire to benefit. However, it will all be right xx a hundred years after this! No man can do more than his best, and I intend to do my best now to make myself understood by the adult deaf mutes of the country. Wont you help me? I want you to criticise my phraseology this time before it is published! Then perhaps I may not only be able to escape the censure of your pen, but also be able to make myself intelligible to those who—thanks to the sign language?!!!—have only an imperfect knowledge of English.

Wont you come and dine with me Thursday evening, quite informally, and after dinner look over my manuscript? We dine at seven o'clock.

In the meantime I shall be glad of any suggestions.

Library of Congress

Yours very sincerely, (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell. Prof.E.A.Fay, Kendall Green.

Kendall Green, Washington, D. C., Mar.4, 1891. Dear Professor Bell:

I shall be glad to render you any help in my power, but I have an engagement for Thursday evening. Would it suit you to have me call at your house on Thursday afternoon between three and four, instead of the evening? Or I could come Friday afternoon, if you would prefer. I will go to the telephone on Thursday afternoon at three o'clock and see which arrangement, if either, you like best. If you are going to be absent at that time, perhaps you will leave word.

I have been much grieved, as you know, at the course you have taken with respect to the plans of the College, but I still believe in the purity of your motives. As we were unable to see the matter in the same light before your action was taken, I suppose we cannot hope to do so now, and I propose that, unless some good is to be gained by discussion that I do not know of, we refrain from discussing the subject when we meet. If at any time I can do anything to promote a better understanding, I shall be very glad.

Yours sincerely, (Signed) E.A.Fay.

March 5, 1891. Dear Professor Fay:

Your note of the 4th inst. just received.

I am sorry you have an engagement for to-night. Would be glad if you could look in to-morrow (Friday) afternoon and give me the benefit of your criticism. Of course, I shall respect your wish, that we refrain from discussing the subject of my recent opposition to the plans of the college.

At the same time I am sorry that you have that desire, because you have not yet heard my side of the story. The conversation we had upon the subject occurred just after I had

Library of Congress

heard of the application to Congress for the first time, and before I had had time to study up the subject. ? Since then, I believe, you have seen none of my arguments, for I did not keep any one at the college posted in the matter while the discussion was going on. I presume, therefore, you know nothing of what I have said and done during the last few weeks, with the exception of my letter to Senator Allison. I direct your attention to the fact that this was not an argument, but a request for permission to make one, in which I enumerated a few of the points which I desired to expand before the committee. I sent you last night a copy of my argument before the Appropriation Committee of the House and of President Gallaudet's reply, and I now send you a copy of my final letter to the Chairman of that committee, Mr. Cannon. These two letters show my position before the House Committee.

The Senate Committee gave me a hearing of two minutes in length, and as Senator Allison informed me there was no stenographer present I am unable to supply you with a copy of my remarks. Mr. McCurdy's report to Mr. Fechheimer, dated Feb. 18th. is all the note I have of that hearing. You will find it among the accompanying letters to Mr. Fechheimer, in which I kept him posted as to what went on from time to time. Allow me specially to direct your attention to Mr. Dobyns' letter, which you will find among letters to Mr. Fechheimer. While I would not, of course, press you to discuss the matter with me, I do want you as a simple act of justice to myself to examine carefully what I have done and to read every thing I have written concerning the matter, and to that end I want you to examine my letter press copy book, as well as the type written letters forwarded to you. I do this because I recognize the fact that you are a fair minded man, and would like to know both sides of a question before expressing my any opinion upon it. When I consider how little you know of my actions and words during the last few weeks, I feel much touched by your statement that you still believe in the purity of my motives. Always do that because I assure you it will always be true. I have not only the interests of the deaf at heart, but the interests of the college, and if you recognize the truth of these statements

Library of Congress

you will seek in my conduct and words for some more substantial reason than a spirit of mere opposition.

I am sure that you will recognize that the arguments which have convinced Mr. Fechheimer, and the principals of all the oral schools as well as those of some of the combined schools must have something in them worthy of your consideration, and you have not seen them yet.

Now, my dear Professor Fay, I think it a great mistake that there should be any subject between us that we avoid discussing, and I should infinitely prefer to have you pitch into me for saying and doing things that you do not approve of rather than keep aloof. It is a dangerous thing for two friends to have anything between them that they are afraid to discuss; a free and calm discussion may put a very different phase upon the whole matter.

Of course, I do not intend to press a discussion upon you when you call upon me on Friday, but I will be very glad if you open the subject and ask to see my letter press copy book.

Yours very sincerely, (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell. Prof. E. A. Fay.

Kendall Green, March 7, 1891. Dear Professor Bell:

If you have no objection, will you let me have a copy of your letter to Mr. Cogswell, and allow me to show it at my discretion to friends on Kendall Green?

I do not give you my reason for making this request, but I think you will trust me so far as to accept my assurance that my sole motive is one of entire friendship to yourself.

Yours sincerely, (Signed) E. A. Fay.

March 8, 1891. Dear Prof. Fay:

Library of Congress

In reply to your note of last night, I beg to enclose a copy of my letter to the Hon. Wm.Coggsell, which, of course, you understand was a personal letter to him not intended for publication.

I regret that I do not feel at liberty, with without President Gallaudet's permission, to give you a copy of the communication referred to from Mr.Fechheimer, because it was a copy of a letter that Mr. Fechheimer had sent to President Gallaudet, and which Mr.Fechheimer had enclosed to me for my information.

I thought that Mr.Coggsell should see it, but presumed from its tenor that President Gallaudet would not submit it himself, and so sent it to Mr.Coggsell, confidentially , asking him to return it to me after reading it, which he did.

Yours very sincerely, (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell. Prof.E.A.Fay, Kendall Green.

1336, 19 th Street Washington DC. March 18 th 1891 Copy, Dear Prof. Fay

I presume that the April Annals will contain sum account of my recent opposition to the plans of the College. In justice to myself I am that my side of the question should be properly presented.

I enclose a copy of a letter received from Mr. , and also a copy of my reply. I am somewhat surprised that Mr. should have given very wide circulation to his own letter and failed to make my reply public. Of common I may be mistaken in supposing that he has and given my letter to the public has I have looked for its appearance in vain. I would take it as a personal favor if you would publish Mr. letter to me and also my reply in the April Annuals.

The importance of the subjects, and the that has , will, I am justify you in giving space to these communications.

Yours sincerely Sg d Alexander Graham Bell

Library of Congress

No.

10-98-1006-1-177A-2.4